

# Psalm 116

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good evening everyone. Thanks Derek for leading us in that reading. Now as it was being read out I'm sure you won't have failed to notice the declaration of love at the beginning and the call to praise at the end. But let me ask you how many times in the last few months have you felt like spontaneously crying out I love the Lord or praise the Lord in the face of ruin, grief, hardship, something we're all experiencing as we've been exiled from normality.

It can leave us feeling all sorts of things about God but quite negative as well. So how do we hold on to a feeling of love and praise? How do we bring rest to a troubled soul? Well I want to suggest that we need to anchor our love and praise in something we can trust, something solid, something imperishable. As we journey through the storm we must cast our anchor onto the rocks of salvation and so tonight let us remind ourselves how the Lord delivers his people from sin which wages our death. That through Christ we are saved from spiritual death and in his resurrection we have eternal life. But first let's pray. Father as we gather tonight with restless souls, with our own distress and sorrow speak to us tonight about how you saved us. We can speak to you right now because of Jesus

Christ and so please encourage us and grow our faith by helping us to see the amazing work that he did at the cross. And in his name we pray. Amen. Now in Psalm 116 it doesn't say specifically why our psalmist was facing death.

It doesn't say Somebody who finally in Psalm 116 Listen to me.

Mean Would you Whatrh...

[ 2 : 34 ] Would And then we cannot help but respond with lifelong commitment through prayer and praise.

Now from verse 3 to 11, the psalmist gives us a flashback to the very moment when he was facing death and in need of salvation. And then verse 12 is the turning point, where the psalmist then goes on to explain how he will respond to being saved.

So my first point, crying out for salvation. When we are thinking or talking about salvation, we must always start with remembering or understanding our need for salvation and God's great mercy for giving it to us.

In verse 3, the psalmist paints an emotive image of being both trapped and suffocated. The cords of death entangled me.

Staring death in the eye seems like an inescapable situation. The anguish of the grave came over me. He realizes he is powerless to death.

[ 4 : 15 ] His own strength against his enemy has failed him and broken his spirit. Darkness wins out. He is overcome by distress and sorrow.

His situation of being in need of mercy becomes clearer and clearer. It is at this point of understanding his need for mercy, he knows who he must cry out to.

Verse 4, then I called on the name of the Lord. Lord, save me. Look at the echoing desperation.

Verse 2b, I will call on him as long as I live.

Verse 4, I called on the name of the Lord. 13b, call on the name of the Lord. 17b, call on the name of the Lord. Death seems like an inescapable situation.

It looks hopeless. Despair and anguish weigh heavy. And yet the answer is so beautifully simple.

We just need to call on the name of the Lord.

[ 5 : 24 ] There is an absolutely stunning verse in the book of Deuteronomy. Chapter 30, verse 14. The word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart so that you can do it.

A life of faith, of salvation is not impossible or even difficult to obtain. God has made it so clear that you can literally read the instruction manual.

God has promised victory to his people. All they must do is call on his name. To follow no other so-called gods. To keep his commandments.

In other words, there has never been any great mystery about how to receive God's mercy. Or the fact that only God can give it to us. Some of us will have memories of wrestling.

In a way where when one is overpowered and unable to move. One must cry out for mercy. Well, it's not God who is trapping us. He is not the enemy.

[ 6 : 27 ] It is sin that causes spiritual and physical death. God's mercy releases us from this sin. Because Christ has fought and beaten the enemy on our behalf.

If the coronavirus has taught us anything. It is that we are powerless to death. It may be now or later. But it will come to us all. If we have any anxious feelings about death.

Any distress and sorrow. Any distress and sorrow. We must trust in Christ's victory over the enemy. He is our saviour. And if you don't believe in Jesus. Or you're sitting on the fence.

Surely there has never been a better time. To realise there is something wrong in this world. And we need saving. There must be many people.

Who feel like they wish they could call out to someone for mercy. Well, now is the time to recognise. That God has provided a saviour in Christ.

[ 7 : 26 ] And you need only cry out to him. So my second point. Presented with salvation. Now that the psalmist has told us about his cry for mercy.

We start to see what comes from being saved. How the saved person begins to know who God is. Begins a growing upward trend of faith and love.

Begins a good relationship with God. Look at how the psalmist. Now saved by the Lord. Can bring out three of the stellar attributes of God's character.

Because he knows him intimately. Verse 5. The Lord is gracious and righteous. Our God is full of compassion. How does the psalmist see the attributes of grace, righteousness and mercy.

In his salvation. The answer is in verse 6. In our NIV it says the Lord protects the unwearied. In other translations it says the simple.

[ 8 : 34 ] The word in Hebrew means a person who is naive or acts without caution. The psalmist gives himself a status or portrait of a person who has lived in this way without caution.

During his life he has wandered into disaster. Entangled himself in the cords of death. Death only exists because of sin.

Because of an act of disobedience that scarred humanity's relationship with God. As this person faced death. As this person faced death. He clearly didn't feel confident of his past relationship with God.

He doesn't feel confident that his sin has been atoned for. His soul. His soul. Verse 7. Has been returned to rest. Meaning it was restless. Verse 8.

His eyes are no longer filled with tears. Or his feet stumbling. Meaning he was an emotional wreck. He rests assured that verse 9. He may walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

[ 9 : 38 ] Meaning that his pain of facing death wasn't helped by any assurance in his relationship with God. Clearly he wasn't feeling love and praise for the Lord beforehand.

But no matter how he felt. He still had a faith. And it was his faith that moved God. Look at verses 10 and 11. I trusted in the Lord when I said.

I am greatly afflicted. In my alarm I said. Everyone is a liar. Feeling distress and sorrow about our lives or God.

Is not a sign of being without faith. Human relationships are fickle. People say that first impressions are extremely important.

They are so memorable. And determine the future of our relationship with someone. A bad word or misdeed may ruin a relationship forever. For that's not how God judges his people.

[ 10 : 38 ] However we have felt about God in the past or even now. When we call on the name of the Lord. Our soul can return to rest.

Our eyes are dried and feet stand firm. Our relationship grows stronger. God is compassionate. God is compassionate. God is compassionate. Because no matter what we have done.

If we cry out to him. He will listen. God is gracious. Because no matter how imperfect we are. He knows the perfectness of Jesus. And gives us salvation on his behalf.

No matter how sinful we are. And lacking in holiness. God knows and sees only the righteousness of Jesus. God knows and sees only the righteousness of Jesus. So point three.

Responding to salvation. At the new dawn of the psalmist salvation. He immediately wants to respond. He wants to maintain that relationship with his savior.

[11:40] He has been set free. Released from the anguish of the grave. And he wants to serve and praise the Lord. Look at the question in verse 12.

What shall I return to the Lord for all his goodness to me? The first way the psalmist says he is going to respond. Is verse 13. I will lift up the cup of salvation.

This is most likely a reference to the Passover meal. Where people would remember and celebrate God. For saving his people from slavery. The psalmist wants to be part of this memorial celebration. And he will do it with earnest prayer and worship. He will call on the name of the Lord. And then verse 14. Explains the importance of congregation.

That praise for his salvation is not just a private thing. But a way of responding alongside God's people. Together. Praising God for his goodness. This response all comes from his deliverance.

[12:47] From death. His salvation. Death comes to us all. In that moment. What do we want God to see?

How do we want God to see us? At the moment of our death. Verse 15 says. Precious. Precious. In the sight of the Lord. Is the death of his faithful servants. When we die. We want God to see a faithful servant.

To be precious in the sight of the Lord. At our death. We need God. To see someone who has lived. A faithful life. And this is the response of the psalmist.

After his deliverance. To live as a faithful servant. And he greatly desires to do so. We see this feeling of desire. To serve brought out in verse 16.

[13:44] Truly I am your servant Lord. I serve you just as my mother did. You have freed me. From my chains. I think mentioning that his mother.

Was a faithful servant. Adds to the weight. Of his commitment. He wasn't only born into a godly home. But he himself openly desires. To be faithful. Now you may have noticed.

Already that. Verses 17 to 19. Are almost a mirror image. Of 13 and 14. I think they are part of a three-step process.

That I have tried to express. With my three points tonight. And it's the idea. Of calling on the Lord. Worshipping God. For our salvation. In verse 4.

He is crying out. For salvation. In 13. He has been saved. And so commits. To proclaiming. God's salvation. Then in 17.

[14:42] He wants to respond. With gratitude. For salvation. I will sacrifice. A thank offering. In verses 18 and 19. He extends.

On what he has said. In 14. That he wants to do this. Publicly. And he wants to do it. With fellow worshippers. He has been delivered. From death. And now wants to respond.

With love. And praise. Amongst. God's congregation. In the courts. Of the house of the Lord. In your midst. Jerusalem. The mirrored verses.

Are declaration. Of congregational worship. And the ones between. Are ones of individual. Worship. The psalmist. Is responding. With every ounce.

Of his life. And I can connect. To the idea. Of wanting to respond. To God. As a servant. As soon. As I came to faith. I feel that God's spirit.

[15:37] Spoke to me. In a dream. And as soon. As I woke up. I wanted to devote. My life. To serving God. And I just knew. I needed to get to church.

And figure out. What on earth. Was happening. When we are saved. From spiritual death. And begin. The great transformation. As we receive. New life.

We of course. Want to respond. By being faithful servants. And on our final day. We want God. To see a lifelong. Faithful servant. But we are weak.

And we fail. Time and time. Again. The good news. Is Jesus. Was the perfect. Faithful servant. Who humbled himself. By becoming.

By becoming. Obedient to death. Even death. On a cross. And when we believe in him. That's exactly what God sees.

[16:34] When he looks at us. He respond. We respond. As faithful servants. Loving and praising God. As a gathered congregation. Not because we are hoping.

God will see us. As faithful. But because we trust. In what Jesus did. At the cross. In his death. And resurrection. We trust. That we share.

In his resurrection. And we will be. In his presence. Amongst his people. In the new Jerusalem. Sometimes.

We might wonder. Why we bother. Gathering together. On a Sunday. We might think. Even when we return. To normality. What's the point.

Of actually going. Into the building. We might even think. What's the point. Of hearing. What God has to say. To us. Through the Bible. This psalm.

[17:28] Answers. All those questions. We are not spiritually alive. Unless we come to God. And cry. For mercy. And when we begin.

Our relationship. With God. As saved people. Then why wouldn't we. Want to gather together. To praise. And love. Christ. And encourage. Fellow believers.

As we all embark. On this journey. To the new Jerusalem. Psalm 116. Reminds us. The Bible. Is about. The story.

Of our salvation. And surely. Time spent in it. Will lead us. To love. And praise. Our God. This week. If you want to do something. To meditate.

On Christ's work. At the cross. Why not think about. Jesus. Singing. Psalm 116. At the last supper. Psalm 116.

[18:20] Is amongst. A group of psalms. That would have been sung. At the Passover meal. And so Jesus. Knowing the hour. Of his death. Was on the horizon. He sung this song.

Take time. To meditate. On that. During the week. And I'm sure. You'll feel love. And praise. For the Lord. Let's pray. Father.

Thank you. For our deliverance. From spiritual death. Thank you. That in Christ's resurrection. We can have. Eternal life. Thank you.

That time. In your word. Can bring rest. To our souls. Help us. To grow. In this knowledge. This week. In Jesus name. We pray. Amen.

Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace. Peace.